



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

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HFD INTRODUCES 40 NEW UNITS

Mayor, Fire Chief, Director of Housing and Community Development to speak

The Houston Fire Department will display 40 new units recently purchased through a Community Development Block Grant during a press conference with Mayor Bill White, Fire Chief Phil Boriskie, Housing and Community Development Director Milton Wilson, members of the HFD Apparatus Committee and Chris Ferrara, President/CEO - Ferrara Fire Apparatus, Incorporated, Thursday, April 28, 2005 at 9 a.m. in the Reliant Park blue parking lot (enter the McNee gate off Kirby and follow the signs.)

"In order to better serve and protect we need to make sure that the Houston Fire Department has the most current and up-to-date equipment," said Boriskie. "We are always trying to make the fire department better and these new units help us with this continuous endeavor."

The units, consisting of 21 ambulances, eight squads and 11 engines will be replace older units which will be recycled back into the department's fleet, making the oldest frontline engines 1996 models. They will be replaced in some of the older neighborhoods and areas of high call volume, including several of the Wards, Magnolia Park, South Park, Sunny Side, Acres Homes and other such neighborhoods.

The ambulances, 11 Ford and 10 Chevrolet models will be placed at fire stations 9, 12, 17, 18, 20, 25, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 39, 43, 46, 55, 56, 58, 59 and 67. The squads will have Chevrolet cabs and will be placed at Fire Stations 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 34, 40 and 46.

The Ferrar engines will be placed at Fire Stations 9, 17, 19, 20, 25, 31, 34, 35, 46, 55 and 67. All of the units will be in service within several weeks, after training and finishing touches are made, such as the license plates.

The HFD Apparatus Committee, consisting of five firefighters and several administrative personnel, helped in the selection and design process of the new units from mid-February to mid-April.

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The funds came from the Community Development Block Grant that the City of Houston receives each year from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Currently, the City receives about \$35,000,000 a year. The amount of the grant for the Fire Department was \$6,315,755.00

The purpose of the grant is to aid in the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. To that end, "public improvements and facilities" is an eligible activity. Public facilities include all improvements and facilities that are either publicly owned or that are traditionally provided by the government. This includes firehouses. In assessing its needs, the Fire Department had already determined which of its locations were in need of new fire equipment. The equipment purchased for firehouses located in low and moderate income neighborhoods that comprise the Mayor's Houston Hope initiative was eligible to be paid out of federal funds.

This ties in with the Mayor's Houston Hope and these funds provided much needed resources to help in this eligible initiative. Most of all, it gave some of the most distressed areas in Houston a much needed facelift in the area of public safety and public safety equipment.

" We've got the best big-city fire department in the nation and we are committed to keeping public safety as our highest priority," said Mayor White. "This new equipment will help us to do that. "